

State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

Post Office Box 12267
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May 14, 2008

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
P.O. Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval H. 4844, R-263.

This bill would allow the Dillon County Board of Education to use other sources of revenue to support a \$60 million bond referendum approved by county voters last year. We believe this legislation is fundamentally flawed on two fronts.

To begin, H. 4844 would change the original spirit of the referendum. Dillon voters went to the polls this past December with the understanding that the bond referendum before them was for the construction of school facilities and was to be financed with an additional one-percent sales tax. However, this bill would in effect be a "redo" by now allowing other revenues to fund the bond. We believe it is unfair to a voter when the assumptions for which a vote was rendered are changed after the fact.

Changing what was promised also represents a breach of trust. We have advocated that government actions should be transparent so that voters can make informed choices. Unfortunately, this bill appears to violate this principle as well.

In the specific case of Dillon County, we believe the time has come for Columbia to let go of some of the management it exercises over the school district. While the General Assembly does play a very important role in education – both in policy and funding – it should be at a statewide level. However, with Dillon County schools, the members of the Board of Education are appointed by the legislative delegation and school taxes are set by legislation. Ultimately, the people of Dillon County should have a far greater voice in their school district, and legislation like this only highlights that disconnect.

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.

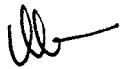
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As we have said on many occasions, the varied management practices and taxing authority only serve to weaken our ability to improve school performance. I would respectfully ask this veto be sustained and ask that the General Assembly send this administration legislation that uniformly devolves management of local school districts away from Columbia and back to the communities they serve.

For these reasons, I have vetoed H. 4844, R-263.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MS', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Sanford